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## **Examining the benefits of audience integration: Does sharing of or commenting on online news enhance the loyalty of online readers?**

Lischka, Juliane A ; Messerli, Michael

**Abstract:** This study investigates whether sharing of or commenting on online news enhances loyalty toward online news outlets. We identify two mediators of audience integration and loyalty: satisfaction and trust, which are measured by attitudinal attributions toward a news outlet. Loyalty is measured by frequently and exclusively using an online news outlet and an absent willingness to change to another online news outlet in the future. The relations between audience integration, satisfaction, trust, and loyalty are estimated with a mediation model. Results from an online survey with N = 1825 Swiss online news users reveal small but significant effects of sharing and commenting quantities on loyalty. Sharing tends to increase satisfaction, which in turn enhances loyalty. In contrast, commenting deteriorates satisfaction and trust, but directly improves loyalty. Overall, sharing and commenting slightly increase loyalty. In conclusion, sharing has a small, positive attitudinal relationship-building capacity for online news outlets, whereas commenting does not. Nonetheless, commenting features should not be abandoned by news outlets.

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## Examining the benefits of audience integration

### Does sharing of or commenting on online news enhance the loyalty of online readers?

**Juliane A. Lischka and Michael Messerli**

Juliane A. Lischka, Institute of Mass Communication and Media Research, University of Zurich, Switzerland. E-mail: [j.lischka@ipmz.uzh.ch](mailto:j.lischka@ipmz.uzh.ch), Twitter: <https://twitter.com/julianelischka> (corresponding author)

Michael Messerli, Institute of Mass Communication and Media Research, University of Zurich, Switzerland. E-mail: [michael.messerli@access.uzh.ch](mailto:michael.messerli@access.uzh.ch)

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**KEYWORDS** online journalism; media management; participatory journalism; user-generated content; user comments; audience integration; uses and gratifications approach; social media

## Introduction

In a highly competitive online environment where switching costs are low for readers, gaining and retaining a loyal audience is more important than ever for online news outlets. According to marketing literature, loyal customers increase the profitability and brand value of a company (Aaker 1996) and are relevant for developing a sustainable competitive advantage (Dick and Basu 1994, 99). Scholars emphasize the role of online audience participation for building trust, satisfaction, and loyalty towards an online news outlet (Vujnovic 2011; Chung and Nah 2009; Kim 2012). Jönsson and Örnebring (2011, 141) expect that user-generated content (UGC) “in online newspapers may increase the brand capital for both the offline and online versions.” Further, more involved readers also engage more in advertisements (Napoli 2011), which is valuable for a news outlet’s advertising clients. Hence, there is potential commercial value of online participation deriving from audience loyalty that could determine the current and future economic state of a news outlet.

Sharing became an important distribution channel for news organizations, since the majority of online social network users receive news via recommendations of friends (Domingo, Palomo, and Masip 23.05.2015; Hermida et al. 2012; Mitchell, Rosenstiel, and Christian 2012). However, the part of the online audience that creates online content or comments on online articles was often found to be much lower than 10% (Bergström 2008; Hermida and Thurman 2008; Thurman 2008). Also more recently, authors argue that online participation has not become as central to news consumption as often assumed (Costera Meijer and Groot Kormelink 2014; Groot Kormelink and Costera Meijer 2014; Nielsen and Schrøder 2014). Furthermore, journalists have a critical opinion about user comments and partly tend not to pay close attention (Bergström and Wadbring 2015; Tandoc 2014). Since quality management and moderation of the comment section requires costly resources, a discussion of temporarily abandoning or outsourcing the commenting function from online articles was raised in journalism practice (Hille and Bakker 2014; Martin 2015; Newman 2014). In addition, practitioners as well as scholars argue that inadequate comments may even harm the news brand (Canter 2013; Ots and Karlsson 2012).

In order to assess whether sharing and commenting are beneficial for online news outlets, this study investigates whether audience integration, i.e., online *participation* (commenting) and online *distribution* (sharing) (Hille and Bakker 2013), affects the loyalty toward an online news outlet.

Empirically, we conduct an online survey of  $n = 1'825$  users of online outlets of supra-regional tabloid and quality newspapers, regional newspapers as well as a public-service broadcaster (PSB) in the German-speaking area of Switzerland. Switzerland is considered to be a country with traditionally high newspaper circulation (Hallin and Mancini 2004) and a comparably far reach of newspapers to a broader audience (Brüggemann et al. 2014). But newspaper circulation has been declining in favor of online news sources (e.g., fög-Forschungsbereich Öffentlichkeit und Gesellschaft 2013). In 2014, almost two-thirds (63%) of the Swiss population read news online, which is similar to other Western countries (62% on average in the United Kingdom, United States, France, Germany, and Denmark; see Newman and Levy 2014; Bundesamt für Statistik 2015b), one in five (19%) create their own content online (Bundesamt für Statistik 2015c), and 7% discuss political topics online (Bundesamt für Statistik 2015a). Therefore, we consider Switzerland a good example for studying online participation effects on loyalty toward online news outlets.

## Literature Review

To understand how audience integration is related to loyalty, this study draws on perspectives from the uses and gratifications tradition. The uses and gratifications approach proposes that media choice depends on gratifications sought by an audience member, which leads to a certain level of gratifications obtained after the media use (Katz and Blumler 1974). The degree of accordance of sought and obtained gratifications affects repeat media choice, or online, revisit intention. For online news, Yoo (2011) as well as Chung and Nah (2009) show that audience integration mediates the relation between gratifications sought and obtained and thus determines future media use, which is a relevant loyalty dimension for media brands (Lischka 2015). In the following, first, motivations for sharing and commenting activities are derived from previous research in order to understand socio-psychological dynamics of audience integration. Secondly, audience integration is related to loyalty toward the news outlet and its antecedents, satisfaction and trust.

### *Drivers of Audience Integration*

Sharing and commenting can be regarded as social exchange of non-material goods in Homans' (1958) sense. Macek (2013, 295, 296) argues that *sharing*, the "desire to participate in the circulation of and control over texts", is a social act of "performative self-exposure and ... a performative exposure of taste and consumption". Berger and Milkman (2012) discuss, based on Homans (1958), that certain content characteristics of articles offer social exchange value. That is, the sender expects that a certain content may help others, it supports the sender's self-enhancement as the sender appears knowledgeable to others, or the sender aims to generate reciprocity and to deepen social connections (Berger and Milkman 2012, 193). Bobkowski (2015) shows in an experimental design that news containing informational utility are shared more often on social networks. Berger and Milkman (2012) investigate the motivations of readers that share news articles with others. Their content analysis of the most often shared articles of the *New York Times* in combination with an experiment reveal that positive and negative emotions potentially arouse readers (awe, amusement, anxiety, and anger) and lead to sharing. Also practical utility, interest, and surprise are positively connected to sharing. Thus, sharing of articles can be regarded as a social transaction activity motivated by an enhancement of the self-concept and social relations of the sender through information utility.

Christodoulides, Jevons, and Bonhomme (2012, 56) review previous research on brand-related UGC for consumer brands and identify co-creation (to enjoy creating online content), empowerment (feelings of power and control, to reveal personal information, to influence people), community (knowledge sharing, desire to interact and network), and the self-concept (self-expression, self-promotion, identity shaping, creation of a sense of belonging) as motivating factors for creating content. Similar motivations may cause *comment* creation. Readers comment on articles because they want to discuss matters of personal interest with others, educate others, answer or ask questions, add information and so forth (Singer 2009; Canter 2013; Brake 2014; Springer, Engelmann, and Pfaffinger 2015), which combines community value and self-expression. Springer, Engelmann, and Pfaffinger (2015) reveal, based on a survey of German online commenters, lurkers, and non-commenters, that commenting is driven by social-interactive motives such as to discuss with others. Non-commenters consider commenting a waste of time in view of the low quality of discussions. Canter (2013) analyzes the content of online comments and articles in two UK regional

newspapers and finds that the dominant reason readers comment online is to express a personal opinion on a story. The second motivation is to interact with other readers. Using online surveys combined with content analysis of comments in UK and Israeli mainstream news sites, Nagar (2011) reveals similar motivations for commenting including the desire to express an opinion on important issues, the exchange and sharing of knowledge with other people, and the opportunity to let off steam. According to Nguyen (2010), the ability to discuss online news with peers increases the perceived importance of online news. Overall, these results indicate that sought community gratifications motivate commenting.

Therefore, sharing and commenting activities are based on benefits provided through exchange with others. We expect the following.

H1. Community gratifications positively affect the sharing quantity of users.

H2. Community gratifications positively affect the commenting quantity of users.

The level of audience participation also depends on news content characteristics and demographics. Many studies have revealed a digital divide by age, education, and gender explaining differences in content creation practices. Brake (2014) shows that younger, better-educated, and male audience members are more active in sharing or producing online content and explains this by a motivational, material, skills, and usage divide. Also Hargittai and Walejko (2008) report that online content creation is related to socioeconomic status and gender. Gender, age and education also determine the type of media content used online. According to van Deursen and van Dijk (2014), lower-educated people use the Internet less for getting information and more for social interaction. Similarly, in Switzerland, higher-educated people use the Internet for information whereas lower-educated people use it for leisure (Latzer et al. 2013). These content preferences may reinforce sociodemographic differences in participation levels. In Tenenboim and Cohen's (2015) study, sensational topics and curiosity-arousing elements increase reading whereas political or social topics and controversial elements trigger comments. Consequently, commenting may be related to the level of education due to information news preferences and news outlet selection. Thus, different levels of audience integration activity may exist across online news outlets with different hard or soft news emphases. Thus, age, education, gender, and news content type should be added as control variables to the suggested hypotheses.

### *Relation between Online Audience Integration and Loyalty*

Marketing literature defines *loyalty* as behavioral or intentional retention response to attitudes toward products or services. Loyalty explains long-term, committed relationships of consumers with brands. A loyal consumer has a strong "relationship between an individual's relative attitude and repeat patronage" (Dick and Basu 1994, 99). Oliver (1999, 42) defines loyalty as "an attained state of enduring preference to the point of determined defense." The outcome, intentional or behavioral reuse, is central to the loyalty concept, however, it is not sufficient to describe strong relationships. Loyalty comprises attitudinal, i.e., cognitive, affective, and conative, dimensions when referring to "the degree to which customers intend to repeat their purchases in the future (intention of future behavior), express a positive attitudinal willingness toward the provider (affective loyalty), and consider this provider the sole option for future transactions (cognitive loyalty)" (Picón, Castro, and Roldán 2014, 747). For online environments, an e-loyalty concept is derived containing the repeat visit rate to websites and the amount of time spent at a website on the behavioral loyalty dimension (Gommans, Krishnan, and Scheffold 2001). For online news outlets, loyal behaviors include spending more time on or visiting a media brand website more often. On the cognitive loyalty dimension, users of online news outlets regard an outlet as the best alternative to fulfil their needs. On the affective dimension, users prefer an online news outlet and are willing to reuse

it. On the conative dimension, users express a reuse intention, which is expected to transfer to the actual reuse behavior. To measure news website loyalty, Tarkiainen et al. (2008) suggest using the attitudinal and intentional dimensions.

A necessary antecedent of loyalty is *satisfaction* (e.g., Kotler et al. 2012; Oliver 1999; Oliver 1980). Satisfaction is an “overall evaluation of personal consumption experience” (Suh and Youjae 2006, 146). When post-usage evaluations are satisfying, this likely leads to reuse, a behavioral loyalty dimension. The rationale for the satisfaction-loyalty causality can be based on the concept of attitude-behavior consistency and the theories of reasoned action and planned behavior (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980; Lutz 1977; Ajzen and Fishbein 2005). Pre-purchase expectations of a customer are confirmed or disconfirmed after purchase, which determines the intention to repurchase and the actual repurchase behavior (Oliver 1999). With online news outlets, audience members have certain expectations when reading online news, which are guided by previous usage experiences. These expectations are confirmed or disconfirmed after reading articles, blogs, comments of other audience members, watching videos—or any content offered on the news outlet’s websites. The degree of confirmation affects the satisfaction with the online usage experience and adds to the overall satisfaction with this news outlet, which in turn determines the intention to read online news of the news outlet again in the future. We propose the following.

H3. Higher satisfaction positively affects loyalty toward an online news outlet.

However, satisfaction is not sufficient to predict loyalty. Perceived value, commitment, or trust can influence reuse of products or services (Morgan and Hunt 1994). Studies on online brand communities show that customer integration through UGC positively affects brand *trust*, which in turn has a positive effect on brand loyalty (Laroche, Habibi, and Richard 2013; Hur, Ahn, and Kim 2011). A study on news blog users reveals that interaction with news and with other users leads to an increase in credibility of the news blog (Kim 2012). Using interactive features and content submission are positively associated with the satisfaction toward a community news site (Chung and Nah 2009) and increase the probability for revisiting (Yoo 2011). Horppu, Kuivalainen, Tarkiainen, and Ellonen (2008) confirm, based on an online user survey of the online audience of a Finnish consumer magazine web site, that users’ satisfaction and trust determine their loyalty. They further reveal that more active users and writers in discussion forums have lower trust in the news brand. The authors explain this negative relation with a hostile community culture. Hence, audience participation may usually increase loyalty through a more satisfying usage experience and higher credibility attributions. We suggest the following.

H4. Higher trust positively affects loyalty toward an online news outlet.

H5. The relation between sharing and loyalty is positively mediated by satisfaction and trust.

H6. The relation between commenting and loyalty is positively mediated by satisfaction and trust.

Studies on online brand communities show that customer integration through UGC positively affects consumer-based brand equity (Christodoulides, Jevons, and Bonhomme 2012), recommendation behavior, and intention to continue community membership (Woisetschlager, Hartleb, and Blut 2008), which contain dimensions of satisfaction and loyalty. Chung and Nah (2009, 867) emphasize that the integration of users leads to a more satisfactory news consumption and makes journalism more meaningful to the audience. Larsson (2011) shows that newspaper websites offering interactive features are visited significantly more often, which can be interpreted as a higher level of behavioral loyalty. Also Nguyen (2010) shows that the ability to discuss online news with peers increases the online news use frequency. Thus, audience integration may also directly lead to a loyal behavior. Therefore, we test the existence of a direct relation between audience integration and loyalty.

H7. Sharing directly positively affects loyalty toward an online news outlet.

H8. Commenting directly positively affects loyalty toward an online news outlet.

In addition, Keng and Ting (2009) demonstrate that blog user satisfaction is positively connected to the *involvement* with the website. We test the following.

H9. Involvement with the news site positively affects satisfaction.

The research framework is summarized in Figure 1.

[Please insert Figure 1: Research framework, here]

## Method

### *Procedure and Sample*

Empirically, we conducted an online survey with  $n = 1'825$  participants in September 2013. The sample represents a convenient sample due to the recruitment process. The survey was hosted for three weeks by the websites of the tabloid news outlet *20min.ch* and the regional news outlets *Tagesanzeiger.ch*, *Bernerzeitung.ch*, *BaZonline.ch*, and *derbund.ch*. Their monthly gross reach sums up to 133% and covers at least 76% (*20min.ch*) of the Swiss population (see Table 5). Each visitor of the host websites had a chance to join the sample, whereas the chance may have increased with more frequent visits. A higher visiting frequency increases the probability of catching an opportune moment for the user and more frequent users may have more interest in participating in the survey. In order to decrease this tendency, we used the lottery of a 100 CHF Amazon gift certificate as an incentive, which should not be large enough to trigger repeated participation from another device, however. The convenience sample represents these users and thus results cannot be generalized to the total population of Swiss online users.

The majority of respondents stems from the host *20min.ch* (61%), about one quarter (24%) from *Tagesanzeiger.ch*, and about 5% from each regional news host. Thus, shares of respondents approximately correspond to the reach of the host websites in the Swiss population as indicated in Table 5.

Participants were asked to indicate the online news outlet they use most frequently in the beginning of the questionnaire. The questionnaire then referred to the mentioned most frequently used online news outlet. About half of the respondents mentioned *20min.ch* as their most used online outlet (49.8%), followed by *Tagesanzeiger.ch* (24.8%), and *Blick.ch* (8.5%) (Table 5, total sample column). The distribution partly underrepresents the actual coverage of the news outlets, which is caused by the recruiting procedure through the hosting news sites. The top news websites in Switzerland include *Blick.ch*, followed by *20min.ch*, *SRF.ch*, and *Tagesanzeiger.ch* (Alexa 2015). *Blick.ch*, *NZZ.ch*, and *SRF.ch* are underrepresented in the present sample.

About 71% (71%, 58%, 74%, and 77%) of those respondents recruited from *20min.ch* (*Tagesanzeiger.ch*, *Bernerzeitung.ch*, *BaZonline.ch*, and *derbund.ch*, respectively) also indicated their most used online news outlet to be *20min.ch* (*Tagesanzeiger.ch*, *Bernerzeitung.ch*, *BaZonline.ch*, and *derbund.ch*, respectively). No respondent indicated a pure player such as Google or Yahoo! news to be their most often used news outlet, although Google, Microsoft sites, Facebook, and Yahoo! were the most often visited sites in Switzerland in 2013 (Schindler 2013). This result can be caused by the recruitment procedure but is likely because of the traditionally strong newspaper orientation in Switzerland (Brüggemann et al. 2014; Hallin and Mancini 2004). Hence, the recruiting procedure potentially covered about three-quarters of the Swiss population (potentially less since the survey has been hosted for three weeks whereas the online reach refers to unique users per month, and potentially more since it was hosted on four websites with a gross reach of 133%)

and the news outlet deviation covers the most important news outlets in Switzerland. However, the news outlet deviation is biased, which is partly controlled for in the analysis through adding a media type variable as indicated in Table 5.

The online news outlets can be classified according to their parent news outlet type and share of hard news as opposed to soft news. The hard-news score represents shares of articles relating to politics, economics, and culture (hard news, weighted by 10), sports (soft news, weighted by 4), and human interest (soft news, weighted by 2) and is measured by fög-Forschungsbereich Öffentlichkeit und Gesellschaft (2014) based on content analyses of the outlets' front pages in 2013 (see Table 5). The parent news outlet type and hard-news share results in three media types, (1) national/supra-regional soft news ("tabloid"), (2) regional hard news ("regional"), and (3) National/supra-regional hard news ("quality/PSB") (see Table 5).

[Please insert Table 1: Number of respondents per most often used news outlet, here]

The sample ( $n = 1'825$ ) consists of 36% female and 64% male participants who are on average 41 years old. Age, gender shares, and education differ across news media types (see Table 6). Most frequent users of online tabloid news are youngest (36 years), followed by users of quality/PSB news (45 years) and regional news (49 years). These age differences across groups are statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ). The share of female users of online tabloid news outlets (41%) is significantly higher than of quality/PSB (33%) and regional news outlets (30%). Most frequent users of tabloid news outlets had a lower level of education—which is partly due to their younger age. Most frequent users of regional and quality/PSB news outlets have significantly more often a university degree than tabloid users (see Table 6). The age, gender, and education differences are broadly in line with previous findings (Latzer et al. 2013; van Deursen and van Dijk 2014).

In total, one-third (33%) of the participants share and 15% comment on articles at least once during a year. The websites of the tabloid news outlet *20 Minuten* and the regional news outlet *Tagesanzeiger* have the most active readers with about 15% and 13%, respectively, of people who comment at least once a month. Over all survey participants, online readers share articles nine times per year and comment 22 times per year (see Table 6). About 29% (35%; 40%) of online readers of tabloid news (regional; quality news/PSB) share articles and about 13% (15%; 18%) of online readers of tabloid news (regional; quality news/PSB) comment on articles. Over all survey participants, online readers of quality news/PSB share 19 articles per year on average, which is significantly more than the most frequent users of tabloid and regional online news share (eight and nine articles per year) (see Table 6). Unexpectedly, there are no significant age group differences in the share of the active audience or in the frequency of sharing or commenting. In our sample, the younger audience (29 years or younger) does not share or comment on articles more often than older participants.

[Please insert Table 2: Sample description, here]

### *Measurement*

*Moderating variables.* The news outlets that were indicated by the respondents are clustered regarding their stronger focus on soft news (human interest and sports) versus hard news (politics, economics, and culture) (fög-Forschungsbereich Öffentlichkeit und Gesellschaft 2014) and thus represent different groups of news content characteristics (see Table 5).

Age is measured in years. For education, participants are asked to indicate the highest graduation they obtained most recently. The level of education is measured in five ordinal



categories (basic school education of nine years, apprenticeship, A-levels, higher professional education, or university degree). Gender is measured binary as female or male.

*Independent variables.* The independent variable *audience integration* relates to frequencies for the most often used online news outlet. It is measured based on Hille and Bakker (2013). *Sharing* comprises the frequency of sharing of articles on social media platforms or via email with others per year. *Commenting* measures the frequency of commenting on articles per year. If respondents indicated they commented or shared less (more) often than once a month in a filter question, the yearly (monthly) frequency of sharing and commenting was requested in the following question. The variables used for analysis comprise the yearly sum of comments and shares, respectively.

*Mediating variables.* The mediating variables *satisfaction* and *trust* are measured based on Horppu et al. (2008) with five and three items (see Appendix 1) on a six-point Likert scale ranging from totally disagree (0) to totally agree (5). *Community gratifications* are measured based on Gummerus et al. (2012) on a six-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (0) to strongly agree (5) (see Appendix 1). The community gratification items include items revealing that a user wants to profit *from* others and the social network as well as provide information and own ideas *to* others. A Principal Component Analysis (PCA) confirms that the items measure the referring concepts (see Appendix 1). The items indicated in Appendix 1 are combined to a mean index per construct.

*Dependent variable.* The dependent variable *loyalty* is measured with three items, (1) exclusively and (2) frequently using an online news outlet, and (3) an absent willingness to switch to another online news outlet in the future. These items are based on Horppu et al. (2008) and Tarkiainen et al. (2008) and are measured on a six-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (0) to strongly agree (5). A fourth item measuring attitudinal loyalty “To me, [news website] is the best online news platform I know,” loads higher on satisfaction with the online news outlet than with loyalty according to PCA (see Appendix 1). Therefore, the satisfaction instead of the loyalty index contains this item. That is, loyalty toward the online news outlet contains past and present behavior as well as future intention but lacks an attitudinal dimension. This also indicates that an attitudinal loyalty dimension concerning a favorable relationship with the online news outlet is a distinct concept compared to the behavioral loyalty dimension of revisiting the news site.

## Results

### *Drivers of Audience Integration*

H1 and H2 suggest that community gratifications are positively related with sharing and commenting quantities. This relation is tested with an ordinary least squares regression using the single items of community gratifications and control variables gender, age, education, and news media type (see Table 7). Both regression models produce a sufficiently high *F* value. However, the Durbin-Watson test reveals values below 2, indicating positive correlations between errors. Thus, the assumption of independent errors is violated and the results have to be interpreted with caution. Three motives enhance sharing news. First, the motivation *to feel needed by others* reveals a significant negative sign indicating that providing a service for others is a negative driver for sharing. Secondly, instead, social networking aspects that provide added value for the person who shares motivate sharing, such as *to stay in touch with others* and *to get to know others*. In contrast, *to help others* is the

major motivation for commenting. Similar to sharing, the social networking aspect of *staying in touch with others* motivates commenting. Thus, only selected community gratifications are related to sharing and commenting and we partly accept H1 and H2.

Besides socio-psychological motives, the quantities of sharing or commenting are expected to depend on the news media type and user sociodemographics. According to a mean comparison of sharing and commenting quantity (Table 2), the online readers of quality/PSB news share significantly more often but comment less often than tabloid and regional online news readers. Although online readers of quality/PSB news outlets comment eight times per year on average compared to more than 20 times for tabloid and regional news outlets, this is not statistically significant due to the high standard deviations. The news media type does not explain further variance in sharing or commenting quantities according to the regression model with community gratifications in Table 7. Users of tabloid, regional, and quality/PSB differ according to sociodemographics (Table 2). Regional and quality/PSB online news are predominantly read by male, older, and partly more highly educated users. Yet only age tends to explain additional variance in commenting (Table 3). Older users tend to comment more often. Thus, commenting and sharing behaviors of online readers tend to differ by news outlet type and age yet are mainly driven by socio-psychological motivations.

[Please insert Table 3: Motivations for audience integration, here]

#### *Relation between Online Audience Integration and Loyalty*

Overall, respondents indicate a moderate loyalty level (mean = 2.47 on a six-point Likert scale from 0 to 5) and a higher level of satisfaction (mean 3.93) toward their most used online news outlet, which are similar across news media types (see Table 6). The level of trust is mediocre on average (mean 3.14) and is highest for quality/PSB news outlets (mean 3.7) followed by regional (mean 3.29) and tabloid news outlets (mean 3.0). The differences in trust levels are statistically significant at  $p < .05$ . The level of involvement with the news site is low (1.89) and does not significantly differentiate across news media types (see Table 6).

To answer H3 to H9, mediated process analysis is applied. This analysis of conditional direct and indirect effects is based on the PROCESS procedure for model 4 (Hayes 2013a; Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes 2007; Hayes 2013b). The model tests whether “X affects Y because X affects M, and M, in turn, affects Y” (Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes 2007, 186), i.e., in the present case, whether audience integration (X) affects loyalty (Y) directly and/or via a detour through satisfaction (M1) and trust (M2). Following Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes (2007), 5’000 bootstrap samples were drawn for the construction of standard errors and 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals. Results of the PROCESS models with sharing as independent variable are reported on the left and commenting on the right in Table 4 and are described in the following sections. Overall, the models explain low levels of variance in the dependent variables ( $R^2$ ). Thus, further variables, e.g. news content characteristics, impact each dependent variable.

[Please insert Table 4: Influences on loyalty toward the online news outlet, here]

*Sharing, commenting and satisfaction.* The constant reveals that satisfaction with an online news outlet is 3.7 on average on a six-point Likert scale when all other variables are zero (3.669 and 3.740 for sharing and commenting models, respectively). The sharing quantity tends to positively impact satisfaction at  $p < .1$ . Every time a person shares an article, satisfaction with the online news outlet tends to increase by 0.001 points on a six-point Likert scale. Thus, for a one-point increase on the satisfaction scale, 1’000 shares per year, i.e., three times sharing an article per day throughout one year, are necessary. Commenting negatively

impacts satisfaction at  $p < .01$ . That is, with every comment an online user makes, she or he is 0.001 points on a six-point Likert scale less satisfied with the online news outlet.

The more involved an online reader is with the news site, the more satisfied she or he is as a result. Therefore, we accept H9. The more highly educated a person is, the less satisfied she or he is with the news outlet (−.040 points on a six-point Likert scale for satisfaction). Age, gender and the news media type do not significantly affect satisfaction. These results are similar in the sharing and commenting model.

*Sharing, commenting and trust.* The constant reveals that trust is 2.2 on average on a six-point Likert scale when all other variables are zero (2.160 and 2.149 for sharing and commenting models, respectively). Sharing has no significant effect on trust with the online news outlet. Commenting negatively affects trust at  $p < .001$ . That is, with every comment an online user makes, she or he trusts the news outlet 0.001 points on a six-point Likert scale less. When writing three comments per day throughout one year, this effect sums up to one point on the trust scale.

The more involved an online reader is with the news site, the more she or he trusts it. The older online audience members are, the more they trust an online news outlet (.004 points on a six-point Likert scale per year of one's age). The more educated audience members are, the less they trust the news outlet (−.09 points on a six-point Likert scale). Trust is .3 points on a six-point Likert scale higher for regional and another .3 points higher for quality/PSB compared to tabloid online news outlets, which corresponds to the mean comparison for trust per news outlet type in Table 2. Gender does not affect trust. These results are similar in the sharing and commenting model.

*Sharing, commenting and loyalty.* Sharing has no direct effect on loyalty. Commenting has a positive direct effect on loyalty at  $p < .05$  revealing an increase of .001 on the loyalty scale with every comment that is written. A one-point increase of satisfaction leads to almost a half-point increase of loyalty (.408 and .410 for the sharing and commenting models, respectively). Thus, satisfaction positively affects loyalty, which confirms H3. Higher trust slightly increases loyalty, which confirms H4.

Involvement with the news site also increases loyalty. Loyalty tends to be slightly lower with increasing age at  $p < .1$ . Female online audience members have a .25 lower loyalty towards the online news outlet on a six-point loyalty scale. Loyalty does not vary across news media types. These results are similar in the sharing and commenting model.

The PROCESS procedure reveals that sharing tends to have a very small positive indirect effect on loyalty towards the news outlet through a very small positive effect on satisfaction. However, sharing is not related to loyalty through mediation by trust. Hence, we can accept H5 only in part. Sharing has no direct effect on loyalty, which leads to H7 being dismissed. Commenting has a very small negative indirect effect on loyalty through very small but at  $p < .05$  significantly negative effects on satisfaction and trust. Hence, we can accept H6. In addition, commenting has a very small positive direct effect on loyalty and H8 can be accepted. This shows that online audience members intend to reuse the online news outlet although they are less satisfied with it or find it less trustful after commenting.

## Discussion and Limitations

This study investigates whether sharing and commenting affect the loyalty toward online news outlets based on an online survey of  $n = 1'825$  users in Switzerland. First, results reveal that profiting from social relations is a relevant motive for sharing and commenting than solely ingenuously providing information to others. Thus, reciprocity to deepen social

connections as described by Berger and Milkman (2012) stimulate the social transaction activities sharing and commenting. When these gratifications are obtained, satisfaction and loyalty toward the news outlet should increase according to the uses and gratifications approach. In this regard, secondly, we find small statistically significant effects of sharing and commenting on loyalty. According to the estimated PROCESS mediation model, sharing tends to have a mediated positive effect on loyalty through satisfaction. Three times sharing an article a day throughout one year would lead to a one-point increase in satisfaction with the online news outlet on a six-point Likert scale, which in turn leads to a .4-point increase in loyalty toward an online outlet. Commenting has a positive direct effect on loyalty and negative mediated effect on loyalty through satisfaction and trust. That means, to write three comments daily per year would lead to a one-point increase in loyalty on a six-point scale. It also leads to a one-point decrease of satisfaction and trust, which in turn leads to a half-point decrease of loyalty. This negative effect reduces the direct positive impact of commenting on loyalty. As a result, sharing and commenting have similar small effects on loyalty. Thus, a considerable increase in loyalty is achievable but would require very active online audience members. Chung and Nah (2009) showed that a frequent use of content submission such as UGC led to higher satisfaction. This study finds that a *very* frequent use of writing comments results in a slight increase in loyalty—but not in higher satisfaction. Hence, commenting is almost no means to effectively enhance the loyalty of the audience in our sample.

We identify satisfaction as an important antecedent of loyalty toward the online news outlet followed by trust, which is consistent with previous research (Horppu et al. 2008; Laroche, Habibi, and Richard 2013). Yet in contrast with Kim (2012) and Chung and Nah (2009), this study does not confirm that online audience integration consistently increases trust and satisfaction—but commenting slightly decreases trust and satisfaction. At the same time, a higher commenting quantity directly increases loyalty towards the online outlet, which is in line with the findings of Larsson (2011) and Nguyen (2010) revealing higher revisiting figures of outlets offering interactive features to their online audience. These counterintuitive results can be explained based on methodological issues and motivational aspects of the users. The loyalty dimensions used in this study include past and present usage as well as future intention to reuse a news outlet. Although revisiting is a relevant loyalty dimension for online news outlets, attitudinal aspects could additionally reveal the *relationship quality* with a news outlet. We intended to measure attitudinal loyalty with “To me, the news website is the best online news platform I know,” which was previously used as loyalty item (Tarkiainen et al. 2008; Horppu et al. 2008). However, PCA revealed that this attitudinal loyalty item loads together with the satisfaction items on one factor. Thus, we assume that attitudinal loyalty and satisfaction are closely related and that attitudinal loyalty slightly decreases together with satisfaction when commenting on articles—which barely negatively affects usage and revisiting intention, i.e., the intentional dimension of loyalty. This break between attitudinal and intentional loyalty may occur because the motivations of users who comment differ from the motivations leading to reusing the online news website. For example, a user may add her or his view in a comment that was not contained in an article, which results in a lower satisfaction with the news outlet but a higher level of obtained gratifications for the self-image of the user, a socio-psychological aspect. Higher gratifications obtained may lead to a revisiting intention, which is in line with the findings of Yoo (2011).

Future research should use a more extensive measurement of attitudinal loyalty and could complement the measurement of loyalty with further brand-related dimensions, such as brand awareness, brand associations, or perceived quality. These dimensions build the construct of customer-based brand equity (Christodoulides, Jevons, and Bonhomme 2012), which are found to affect online satisfaction, trust, and loyalty differently (Horppu et al. 2008). This broader measure may reveal further influences of audience integration that are valuable

for an online news brand. Future research may also systematically assess gratifications sought and obtained by sharing or commenting and estimate the effects of sharing or commenting on loyalty depending on gratifications obtained.

Results confirm previous findings suggesting that social-interactive motives drive online integration activities (Springer, Engelmann, and Pfaffinger 2015; Canter 2013). However, age, gender, and education have no significant additional impact on audience integration activities besides social-interactive drivers. Thus, social-interactive drivers appear to be universal motivations and gratifications sought when sharing or commenting on articles across different audience groups and online news outlets. In contrast to previous research (e.g., Brake 2014; Hargittai and Walejko 2008), we find no age differences in audience integration activities in the total sample, which may be due to news media-type effects. Online readers of regional online news outlets are older but comment as much as the younger readers of online tabloid news outlets. Thus, including different news media types in the sample provides a more diverse picture of different online audience groups. Moreover, differences in audience integration activities exist between tabloid and regional versus quality/PSB online news outlets. Readers of quality/PSB online news outlets share more articles. Against the background of Tenenboim and Cohen's (2015) study revealing that hard news topics trigger comments, we argue that hard news articles of quality/PSB in combination with a higher trust toward the online news outlet may increase social-interactive value through enhancing the self-concept of a user and thus increase sharing.

Major limitations of this study are related to the sampling method and the resulting convenience sample. First, the Web survey was not hosted by all major news websites in the German-speaking area of Switzerland but by selected news websites, only. Therefore, the usage numbers of online news outlets does not represent the German-speaking audience in Switzerland but is biased according to the news outlets that agreed to host our survey on their website. As we survey online users of the online news outlets, loyalty, satisfaction, or trust levels may be higher than in a random sample of people who use the Internet. Generalizability of our results obtained by analysis methods for random samples is limited due to the used convenience sample, similar to other studies (Chung and Nah 2009; Freund 2011). Second, we requested self-reports on audience integration from participants but were not able to measure their actual online activities on the news sites. Previous research shows that the type of editorial content itself is a major driver for sharing or commenting. However, we cannot make any statements about the kinds of articles that were shared or commented on. Hence, individual content preferences or the read content itself can explain additional variance in sharing and commenting behavior. Future research could considerably profit from a combination of surveying audience members and collecting related data directly from the news sites. Finally, the mediation analysis does not allow the estimation of the effects between mediators. For the current study, the moderated mediation model served as an adequate analysis method to answer the hypotheses.

## Conclusions

Our results indicate that audience integration is a weak method to increase loyalty. Whereas sharing tends to marginally increase satisfaction, which in turn enhances loyalty, commenting marginally reduces satisfaction and trust, but also directly slightly improves loyalty. Putting these results in the background of a costly quality management of user comments for the editorial department and a potential harm of (inappropriate) comments for the news brand's image (Ots and Karlsson 2012; Canter 2013), one may conclude that disestablishing commenting features is reasonable for an online news outlet from a media management perspective. In contrast, since sharing is an additional distribution channel to

latent users and involves no quality management costs, disestablishing sharing features is not reasonable.

However, before commenting is blocked due to small loyalty effects, the consequences of abandoning commenting features have to be assessed. First, the value of *reading* comments for the online audience has to be evaluated. According to Springer, Engelmann, and Pfaffinger (2015) comment reading is related to cognitive and entertainment motives and can provide readers with additional information to form opinions or increase entertainment value, e.g. for lurkers, which in turn may increase satisfaction and loyalty. In Yoo's (2011) study, interest in other people's opinions motivates comment reading that enhances the entertainment value of a news outlet. Second, as discussed by many scholars, the commenting feature possesses a democratic function as an instrument for establishing a reader dialogue and is a sign of appreciation of the readers' views. The lack of commenting possibilities may be interpreted as sign of depreciation by readers "as though online newspaper audiences are increasingly accepting and even appreciative of the role they play" in participatory journalism (Marchionni 2013, 267). Third, interactivity between readers and engagement in content makes journalism more meaningful to the audience (Chung and Nah 2009) and generates a thirst for engagement in public affairs (Canter 2013) and thus provides important functions to society.

To conclude, commenting and sharing may be no instruments to vastly increase revisiting figures and thus not be highly monetarily beneficial to online news outlets at first glance—however, audience integration may be perceived as a sign of appreciation by readers and as a matter of course, since it has become a standard in the industry (Stroud, Scacco, and Curry 2015). Hence, online news outlets benefit only slightly from the commenting function through a marginal increase in loyalty. But ending the commenting function may inflict greater damage on online news outlets.

## Appendix 1: Factor analysis of items per index

No.	Item	Index	Community gratifications	Satisfaction	Involvement w/ news site	Loyalty	Trust
1	I comment and/or share ...to help others.		.816				
2	...to share my ideas with others.		.793				
3	...to provide information to others.		.793				
4	...to get help from other users.		.704				
5	...because I want to stay in touch with others.		.681				
6	...to feel needed by other users.		.664				
7	...because I want to get to know other users.		.598				
8	I am satisfied with the way that [news website] functions.			.771			
9	I like using [news website].			.752			
10	I think that I made the correct decision to use [news website].			.735			
11	I am satisfied with the service I have received from [news website].			.676			
12	To me [news website] is the best online news platform I know.			.513		.420	
13	Browsing [news website] makes me feel like I am in another world.				.795		
14	I get so involved when I browsing [news website] that I forget everything				.774		
15	Browsing [news website] “gets me away from it all”.				.765		
16	I actively use several news websites regularly. (invert)					.786	
17	I have seldom or never considered using other websites or apps than [news website name] regularly.					.739	
18	As long as the present service continues, I doubt that I would switch to another newspaper than [news website].					.696	
19	I do not think that [news website] would intentionally do anything that would prejudice the user.						.757

20	[News website] does not make false statements.					.754
21	I think that the information offered on [news website] is sincere and honest.					.747
Eigenvalue		3.832	3.002	2.592	2.568	2.475
Variance explained		14.7%	11.5%	10.0%	9.9%	9.5%

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Notes. Factor loadings from .4 or higher. Principal Component Analysis (PCA), Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalization. n = 915, respondents with data for all items. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy = .889. Bartlett's test of sphericity  $\chi^2 (325) = 10'936.725$ ,  $p < 0.001$  indicates that the correlations between items are sufficiently large for PCA.



Table 5: Number of respondents per most often used news outlet

Most often used online news outlet	Parent news outlet type	Online reach <sup>1</sup> (%)	Hard- news score <sup>2</sup>	Media type	Web- site users <sup>3</sup> (n)	App users <sup>3</sup> (n)	Total sample <sup>3</sup> (n)	(%)
<i>20min.ch</i> <sup>H</sup>	National free tabloid newspaper	76.1	5.6	1	807	102	909	49.8
<i>Blick.ch</i>	Supra-regional tabloid newspaper	74.5	4.4	1	152	4	156	8.5
<i>BaZonline.ch</i> <sup>H</sup>	Regional daily newspaper	9.7	8.2 <sup>4</sup>	2	70	5	75	4.1
<i>Bernerzeitung.ch</i> <sup>H</sup>	Regional daily newspaper	9.9	7.8 <sup>4</sup>	2	56	7	63	3.5
<i>derbund.ch</i> <sup>H</sup>	Regional daily newspaper	5.5	n.a.	2	33	8	41	2.2
<i>Luzernerzeitung.ch</i>	Regional daily newspaper	6.0	8.5 <sup>4</sup>	2	10	1	11	0.6
<i>Tagblatt.ch</i>	Regional daily newspaper	6.5	n.a.	2	11	0	11	0.6
<i>Tagesanzeiger.ch</i> <sup>H</sup>	Regional daily newspaper	37.5	7.4	2	418	34	452	24.8
<i>NZZ.ch</i>	Supra-regional quality newspaper	36.6	8.0	3	60	14	74	4.1
<i>SRF.ch</i>	National PSB	65.2	8.1 <sup>5</sup>	3	25	8	33	1.8
Total					1'642	183	1'825	100

Notes. <sup>H</sup> Hosted the online survey on their website.

<sup>1</sup> Relation between unique clients (number of devices with access at least once a month) per website (classic and mobile website and app) in September 2013 ([www.net-metrix.ch](http://www.net-metrix.ch)) and 15 years and older resident population in the German-speaking area of Switzerland in 2012 (4'760'432, Bundesamt für Statistik).

<sup>2</sup> Based on content analyses of front-page news in 2013 as published in the *Swiss yearbook of media quality* by fög-Forschungsbereich Öffentlichkeit und Gesellschaft (2014). The score represents shares of articles relating to politics, economics, and culture (hard news, weighted by 10), sports (soft news, weighted by 4), and human interest (soft news, weighted by 2) (fög-Forschungsbereich Öffentlichkeit und Gesellschaft 2014, 244–45). N.a. = no data available.

<sup>3</sup> Study sample (total n = 1'825)

<sup>4</sup> Relates to the parent print news outlet

<sup>5</sup> Relates to the main evening TV news show *SRF Tagesschau*

Table 6: Sample description

	News media type							
	Total (n = 1'825)		Tabloid (1) (n = 1'065)		Regional (2) (n = 653)		Quality/PSB (3) (n = 107)	
	Ø/%	(SD)	Ø/%	(SD)	Ø/%	(SD)	Ø/%	(SD)
Sharing (times per year)	9	(35.0)	8 <sub>a</sub>	(34.5)	9 <sub>a</sub>	(28.9)	19 <sub>b</sub>	(62.7)
Commenting (times per year)	22	(93.2)	21 <sub>a</sub>	(83.6)	26 <sub>a</sub>	(112)	8 <sub>a</sub>	(43.7)
Loyalty <sup>1</sup>	2.47	(1.17)	2.49 <sub>a</sub>	(1.18)	2.44 <sub>a</sub>	(1.16)	2.4 <sub>a</sub>	(1.10)
Satisfaction <sup>1</sup>	3.93	(.79)	3.96 <sub>a</sub>	(.78)	3.88 <sub>a</sub>	(.82)	4.0 <sub>a</sub>	(.71)
Trust <sup>1</sup>	3.14	(.97)	3.00 <sub>a</sub>	(.94)	3.29 <sub>b</sub>	(.99)	3.7 <sub>c</sub>	(.84)
Involvement with news site <sup>1</sup>	1.89	(.90)	1.88 <sub>a</sub>	(.86)	1.89 <sub>a</sub>	(.93)	2.1 <sub>a</sub>	(1.01)
Age (years)	40.8	(16.9)	35.5 <sub>a</sub>	(15.0)	48.8 <sub>b</sub>	(16.4)	44.6 <sub>c</sub>	(17.4)
Gender								
Female	35.8%		41.0% <sub>a</sub>		27.7% <sub>b</sub>		32.7% <sub>a,b</sub>	
Male	64.2%		59.0% <sub>a</sub>		72.3% <sub>b</sub>		67.3% <sub>a,b</sub>	
Education								
Basic school (9 years)	3.7%		5.2% <sub>a</sub>		1.4% <sub>b</sub>		2.8% <sub>a,b</sub>	
Apprenticeship	26.9%		31.9% <sub>a</sub>		21.0% <sub>b</sub>		12.2% <sub>b</sub>	
A-levels	16.7%		19.3% <sub>a</sub>		12.4% <sub>b</sub>		16.8% <sub>a,b</sub>	
Higher profession	21.3%		22.2% <sub>a</sub>		21.0% <sub>a</sub>		14.0% <sub>a</sub>	
University degree	31.1%		20.9% <sub>a</sub>		44.1% <sub>b</sub>		54.2% <sub>b</sub>	
No answer	.4%		.6% <sub>a</sub>		.15% <sub>a</sub>		0.0%	

Notes. Differences between means and percentages across media type groups indicated through subscript letters <sub>a</sub>, <sub>b</sub>, and <sub>c</sub>. Tested with *t*-test and Z-test, accordingly, at  $p < .05$ , Bonferroni adjusted.

<sup>1</sup> Measured on a six-point Likert scale from 0 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

Table 7: Motivations for audience integration

	Sharing					Commenting				
	Coef.	(SE)	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Coef.	(SE)	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	13.844	(12.057)		1.148	.251	-33.514	(27.395)		-1.223	.222
I actively deal with [news website] <sup>1</sup>										
...because I want to get to know other users.	9.874	(4.039)	.151	2.444	.015	-2.022	(9.772)	-.012	-.207	.836
...to help others.	3.661	(2.917)	.075	1.255	.210	25.271	(6.547)	.215	3.860	.000
...to feel needed by other users.	-14.751	(4.528)	-.198	-3.258	.001	-11.766	(9.559)	-.061	-1.231	.219
...to get help from other users.	1.110	(3.675)	.018	.302	.763	-14.137	(8.838)	-.084	-1.600	.110
...to provide information to others.	2.183	(2.350)	.055	.929	.353	-4.011	(5.524)	-.039	-.726	.468
...to share my ideas with others.	-.601	(2.335)	-.015	-.258	.797	3.808	(5.165)	.038	.737	.461
...because I want to stay in touch with others.	11.379	(3.609)	.193	3.153	.002	26.964	(9.572)	.158	2.817	.005
Gender (0 = f; 1 = m)	-4.707	(5.546)	-.037	-.849	.396	.519	(13.536)	.002	.038	.969
Age (years)	-.074	(.175)	-.019	-.425	.671	.796	(.431)	.082	1.845	.066
Education (1 = lowest to 5 = highest)	-3.395	(2.081)	-.072	-1.631	.103	6.701	(4.962)	.057	1.350	.177
News media type (1/2/3) <sup>2</sup>	4.950	(4.260)	.053	1.162	.246	-7.788	(11.927)	-.029	-.653	.514
<i>n</i> <sup>3</sup>	514					620				
<i>F</i>	6.405***					3.829***				
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.087					.065				
Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.067					.048				
Durbin-Watson	1.407					0.668				

Notes. <sup>1</sup> Measured on a six-point Likert scale from 0 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

<sup>2</sup> 1 = National free and supra-regional tabloid news, 2 = Regional news, 3 = Supra-regional quality and PSB news. <sup>3</sup> All respondents without missing data who shared at least once and commented at least once, respectively. \*\*\* *p* < .001.

Table 8: Influences on loyalty toward the online news outlet

	PROCESS model Sharing				PROCESS model Commenting			
	Coef.	(SE)	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Coef.	(SE)	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
DV: Satisfaction ( <i>M1</i> )								
Constant	3.669	(.080)	46.089	.000	3.740	(.093)	40.309	.000
Sharing (times per year)	.001	(.000)	1.856	.064				
Commenting (times per year)					-.001	(.000)	-2.999	.003
Involvement with news site <sup>1</sup>	.266	(.020)	13.346	.000	.269	(.020)	13.522	.000
Age (years)	-.001	(.001)	-1.102	.271	-.001	(.001)	-1.105	.269
Gender (0 = f; 1 = m)	-.071	(.038)	-1.894	.058	-.066	(.038)	-1.739	.082
Education (1 to 5) <sup>2</sup>	-.040	(.014)	-2.817	.005	-.039	(.014)	-2.750	.006
News media type (1/2/3) <sup>3</sup>	-.008	(.031)	-.240	.810	-.005	(.031)	-.173	.863
<i>F</i>	38.477***				39.520***			
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.115				.118			
DV: Trust ( <i>M2</i> )								
Constant	2.160	(.096)	22.570	.000	2.149	(.111)	19.321	.000
Sharing (times per year)	.001	(.001)	1.555	.120				
Commenting (times per year)					-.001	(.000)	-4.382	.000
Involvement with news site <sup>1</sup>	.355	(.024)	14.802	.000	.357	(.024)	14.984	.000
Age (years)	.004	(.001)	2.917	.004	.004	(.001)	2.969	.003
Gender (0 = f; 1 = m)	.012	(.045)	.266	.791	.022	(.045)	.485	.627
Education (1 to 5) <sup>2</sup>	-.092	(.017)	-5.360	.000	-.090	(.017)	-5.265	.000
News media type (1/2/3) <sup>3</sup>	.306	(.038)	8.143	.000	.307	(.037)	8.220	.000
<i>F</i>	63.727***				67.123***			
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.177				.185			
DV: Loyalty ( <i>Y</i> )								
Constant	.513	(.163)	3.143	.002	.744	(.178)	4.184	.000
Sharing (times per year)	.000	(.001)	-.038	.970				
Commenting (times per year)					.001	(.0009)	2.114	.035
Satisfaction ( <i>M1</i> ) <sup>1</sup>	.408	(.038)	10.687	.000	.410	(.038)	10.747	.000
Trust ( <i>M2</i> ) <sup>1</sup>	.096	(.032)	3.009	.003	.101	(.032)	3.169	.002
Involvement with news site <sup>1</sup>	.274	(.030)	9.243	.000	.272	(.030)	9.223	.000
Age (years)	-.003	(.002)	-1.704	.088	-.003	(.002)	-1.760	.079
Gender (0 = f; 1 = m)	-.249	(.052)	-4.761	.000	-.254	(.052)	-4.861	.000
Education (1 to 5) <sup>2</sup>	-.061	(.020)	-3.086	.002	-.062	(.020)	-3.129	.002
News media type (1/2/3) <sup>3</sup>	.007	(.044)	.168	.866	.008	(.044)	.170	.865
<i>F</i>	69.080***				69.813***			
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.238				.239			

Notes. *n* = 1'783, all respondents without missing data. PROCESS Procedure for Model 4.  
DV = dependent variable.

<sup>1</sup> Measured on a six-point Likert scale from 0 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

<sup>2</sup> Measured in five categories, category 1 = lowest education to 5 = highest education.

<sup>3</sup> 1 = National free and supra-regional tabloid news, 2 = Regional news, 3 = Supra-regional quality and PSB news.

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